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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4453
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHRN/USMISSION UN ROME

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 002165

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
AIDAC
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR DCHA SUDAN TEAM, AFR/SP
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA, USAID/REDSO, AND FAS
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NAIROBI FOR SFO
NSC FOR JBRAUSE, NSC/AFRICA FOR TSHORTLEY
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAID](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [SU](#) [AU](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR - IRC REPORTS SEXUAL ASSAULTS

REF: a) Khartoum 2150, b) KHARTOUM 1912

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Summary

1. (SBU) On August 7, nearly 300 female internally displaced persons (IDP) convened a meeting in Kalma IDP camp to ask the international community to increase protection through the resumption of African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) firewood patrols. Following the meeting, the non-governmental organization (NGO) International Rescue Committee (IRC) issued a press release on August 23 reporting that 200 women had been sexually assaulted, including rape, and 200 others attacked in the area surrounding Kalma camp during the previous five weeks. Since the press release, the Government of National Unity (GNU) has created obstacles for IRC programs and has smeared it in the press. Additionally, in an unrelated event, one IRC staff member was killed in Hashaba, where an IRC clinic was looted during fighting (Ref A). End Summary.

IDP Women Demand Better Security and Protection

2. (SBU) On August 7, nearly 300 female IDPs convened a meeting in Kalma IDP camp to ask the international community to increase protection in the camp through the resumption of AMIS firewood patrols. According to USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) staff, who attended the meeting, approximately 20 women articulated an increase in violence targeting them and an increase in cruelty associated with attacks since mid-July. The women described attacks that included stealing women's clothing, raping pregnant or elderly women, shooting guns into the air to frighten and intimidate women, and throwing babies onto the ground. Additionally, the group of women reported that men who accompany women to collect firewood have been tied to camels and dragged.

3. (SBU) At the meeting, the women and NGOs asked AMIS to resume consistent firewood patrols, and to initiate helicopter patrols. During the rainy season, vegetation and wadis (seasonal rivers) provide obstacles to patrolling a sufficiently broad area by vehicle. Despite the risk, women cross wadis and navigate muddy terrain on foot or by donkey to collect firewood. To ensure the protection of women collecting firewood in areas inaccessible by

vehicles, helicopter patrols have been suggested as a way to increase their safety. (Comment: USAID staff note that helicopter use is unlikely due to resource constraints. End comment.)

14. (SBU) As of August 27, AMIS firewood patrols have taken place only once since April 2006. Per ref B, AMIS had agreed to resume firewood patrols on July 29. However, USAID staff report that no firewood patrols have occurred since that date.

IRC Press Release

15. (SBU) Subsequent to the meeting, IRC issued a press release on August 23 to call attention to the assaults in Kalma camp with data collected from the IRC-managed women's centers. The IRC press release reported nearly 200 sexual assaults, including rape, and an additional 200 attacks over the last five weeks in the area surrounding Kalma camp.

16. (SBU) Prior to issuing the release, IRC's Country Director invited major donors, including USAID, the Netherlands Embassy, and the Department for International Development (DFID), to inform the IRC of its intent to release a public statement detailing the reported gender-based violence in and around Kalma camp. At the meeting, IRC indicated that it had exhausted all other possible courses of action, and was willing to accept the consequences associated with issuing the release. IRC indicated that other organizations were unwilling to be associated with the press release, including the Kalma camp coordinator, Norwegian Refugee Council.

THE FALLOUT OF THE PRESS RELEASE

17. (SBU) On August 27, IRC received a letter from the Director of
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International Organizations at the GNU Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs requesting the names, marital status of women, dates of incident, medical report, and police report of all women included in the recent report. The letter gave IRC 48 hours to provide a response.

18. (SBU) On August 28, the local press Sudan Vision ran a story that claimed to corroborate that IRC is cooperating with the International Criminal Court (ICC). The newspaper claimed to have obtained a letter laying out guidelines for IRC staff cooperation with the ICC. The same day, IRC received a letter from the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) Director asking for an explanation of what was printed in the Sudan Vision and whether collecting evidence for the ICC was a core mandate of IRC. IRC responded that the letter was never approved and does not represent the policy of IRC.

19. (SBU) In the following days, several IRC staff had difficulty obtaining exit visas, including one American citizen and one British national. IRC's program in Kass was suspended temporarily by National Security, and only resumed after intervention of the Kass town Commissioner. On September 3, an IRC nurse was killed in Hashaba, North Darfur when IRC's clinic was looted (Ref A), although there is no evidence that this incident is linked to the press release.

HUME